

“Adventures in the Past”

Since the early 1990s, “Adventures in the Past” has been the BLM’s umbrella program for public education about, awareness of, and involvement in the protection of BLM cultural (archaeological and historic) resources. “Adventures in the Past” was created in direct response to the 1988 Archaeological Resource Protection Act amendments requiring agencies to develop public outreach and educational programs in archaeology. The goals of “Adventures” included increasing the public’s responsible enjoyment of cultural resources, demonstrating the BLM’s good stewardship of these resources, and reducing the destruction of cultural resources on the public lands.

The focus of “Adventures in the Past” in the 1990s was on regional events in the Four Corners, Great Basin, and High Plains regions of the U.S., and on Christopher Columbus Quincentennial events. Regional “Adventures” activities included tours, conferences, and public presentations; however, the initiative did not sustain itself because it focused on costly, labor-intensive individual events instead of long-term commitments and goals, which were not articulated. While 2006 marks the centennial of the Antiquities Act, a seminal piece of historic preservation legislation, and provides the perfect occasion around which to revitalize “Adventures,” the limited success of the earlier program has highlighted the importance of program sustainability and continuity. The new “Adventures in the Past” is cast as “Adventures in the Past. . .The Adventure Continues.”

The current initiative builds upon the successes BLM has had with Adventures in the Past” over the past decade, and strives to create a sustainable initiative, broadened to also encompass paleontological resources. The goals of the new “Adventures” initiative are to:

- Highlight accomplishments and heritage resource benefits of the Antiquities Act and the National Historic Preservation Act;
- Expand support for heritage resources and encourage stewardship;
- Ensure that visitors to the public lands know how to appreciate heritage resources without adversely impacting them; and
- Use heritage resources as tools to teach sciences, history, respect for cultural diversity, and citizenship skills

Among the BLM products and activities that are part of the new “Adventures in the Past” effort are heritage site brochures, exhibits, classroom visits, field tours, virtual tours, and online information and features, as well as materials produced under the BLM Heritage Education program, e.g., Project Archaeology teacher curricula, the “*History Mystery*” series teacher articles, educational workshops, and State-specific teacher and student guides. More information on many of these resources will be available via the links provided in the new online “Adventures” Communications electronic “tool kit” to be created.